

**State Technical Committee Meeting
June 23, 2021**

Welcome Comments from State Conservationist – Jerry Raynor:

- Welcomed all the attendees.

Partner Opportunities, Grants and Initiatives, Jill Reinhart, ASTC Partnerships, NRCS:

- Sharing Partnership opportunities that have passed and that are also still open finishing up Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and moving into FY 2022.
 - Conservation Innovation Grants Classic – July 19, 2021.
 - Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production – July 30, 2021.

Source Water Protection Areas FY22, Shannon Zezula, NRCS State Resource Conservationist:

- The national guidance and data to set NRCS Source Water Protection Area for FY 2022 (is the same as it was in FY 2021) so Indiana's FY 22 Source Water Protection Areas will be the same as those in FY 21
- Question: How do we apply this map to our programs? We have these areas geo referenced in our business tool (Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool – CART) that we use to assign ranking points.

Farm Bill Program Updates, Adam Heichelbech, ASTC Programs, NRCS:

- Welcomed Tracy Bailey to the Program staff – Easement Program Support Specialist.
- Update of Area Wide Market Analysis (AWMA) will be ordered for FY 2022 GARC rates.
- ACEP (Easements) FY 2021:
 - ALE:
 - 2 Ineligible applications.
 - Majority of funding returned.
 - WRE:
 - 56 Applications Ranked.
 - 26 Applications Funded.
 - Funding also used for AWMA and modification to contract amount.
 - WRE Stewardship
 - Funding enhancement on closed/restored easements.
- EQIP Classic:
 - Over 2000 eligible Applications received and ranked.
 - Approved EQIP applications: 723.
 - Wildlife target status*: 9.7% (indicators from where we currently stand, not final numbers).
 - Livestock target status*: 53% (indicators from where we currently stand, not final numbers. This target is also an increase in Indiana from 3-4 years ago.).
- CSP Classic:
 - 129 eligible applications received.
 - Approved CSP applications: 30 AgLand, 2 Organic, 32 Forestland.
- CSP Renewals:
 - 36 contracts.

- CSP Grasslands (has not been farmed for around 10 years and is grassland and then start to move them into another contract to use that land):
 - 11 Contracts.
- EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC):
 - NRCS National Leadership decision to pilot EQIP CIC for FY 2021 in early June.
 - FY 2021 CIC will be piloted in five states: CA, CO, AZ, OR, NM.
 - Will focus on Climate Smart Ag, Irrigation Water Use Efficiency.
 - Thanks to those committee members who met with NRCS to provide feedback.
 - We anticipate being to utilize decisions Indiana made for FY 2021 in FY 2022.
 - NRCS will be taking a closer look at how we can use different authorities in the Farm Bill to provide payments and contracts in a way that is complimentary to both EQIP and CSP.
 - Headquarters anticipates a national signup for FY 2022.

EQIP CIC Status Update:

- NRCS National Leadership decision to pilot EQIP CIC for FY 2021 in early June.
 - FY 2021 CIC will be piloted in five states: CA, CO, AZ, OR, NM.
 - Will focus on Climate Smart Ag, Irrigation Water Use Efficiency.
- Thanks to those committee members who met with NRCS to provide feedback.
- We anticipate being to utilize decisions Indiana made for FY 2021 in FY 2022.
- NRCS will be taking a closer look at how we can use different authorities in the Farm Bill to provide payments and contracts in a way that is complimentary to both EQIP and CSP.
- Headquarters anticipates a national signup for FY 2022.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Updates, Stephanie Alexander, FSA:

- Back in April the national office announced that they were going to have some revision continuous and general sign ups. They have made some great chances for conservation.
- Continuous (Deadline August 6), General (Deadline July 23), and Clear 30 (Deadline August 6) were opened on June 14.
- SAFE practices moved back over to Continuous Sign-Up.
- Grassland Sign-up is opening July 12.

Forest management:

- Funding available through September 30, 2023.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Looking to have a September meeting before we head into FY 2022.
- Looking to have various program 101 trainings to understand the basics and ins and outs of these programs.

Partner Updates:

Jeff Cummins – Farm Bureau – Hosting Wetland and Water Ways Educational Series – August 19 and 26, 2021

Josh Griffin – IDNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife – Public input about increasing fees and how fish and wildlife is managed in Indiana – these should be in effect around FY 2022-23

A lot of funding is running through DNR to go towards conservation project.

Adding 2 full-time CRP positions to assist NRCS.

Joe Schmees – Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts – New program partnership with NRCS with urban soil health (5-year agreement). Develop local partnerships to meet the needs of producers.

Jeff Kiefer – US Fish and Wildlife – Assistance with WRE Ranking visits and things are opening with field to engage. Update of 5-year plan on a regional basis and then step down into individual states.

Eileen Kladvko– Purdue Agronomy – Hired a new Corn specialist, CCSI is having a lot of soil health training in the works in August. Purdue Field days that are planned at Ag centers planning to be in-person.

Trevor Laureys – Indiana State Department of Agriculture– Western Lake Erie Basin Kickoff meeting on June 29 and the first meeting with carbon working group and Indiana’s role of what a carbon market might look like. (Breakdown: goal of the meetings is to provide a recommendation on how Indiana can navigate the potential expansion of a voluntary carbon credit markets. I do see a few Purdue folks listed as attending)

Susan Brocksmith – Corn Marketing Council – Corn marketing council to try and increase the use of ethanol and to incorporate those types of gas and fuel and get people comfortable with using these